

## **Crematory Redesign Gets Go Ahead**

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

As town meeting reviewed article 6, the town's FY2005 capital budget, the expense that caused the most debate was \$80,000 for architectural plans and specifics for a remodeled crematory.

Voters questioned whether the money should be spent

now or if the town should wait until better financial times. Steve Jones of Ford Farm Rd. made an amend-

ment to eliminate the \$80,000 from the budget.

Built in the late 1970s, the crematory is due for updating, said Department of Public Works Director Tom Daley. The crematory has no restrooms or running water.

"The existing facility is woefully inadequate," said Vinnie Walsh of the Fiscal Advisory Committee. "It is not attractive in any way, shape or form for the people in what they're going through."

A survey of the building by an industry expert indicates that the crematory is running at capacity and will need improvements in order to stay competitive.

The building performs 2,400 cremations a year with its four retorts, or burners. Daley said each retort does 600 cremations a year. According to the manufacturers, the retorts should be relined after every 500 to 700 cremations; however, Duxbury's retorts are relined every other year.

"We're maxed out," said Daley.

"Cremations are on the rise. We're trying to plan ahead," he added.

Duxbury's crematory competes with private buildings, but it is more attractive since its prices are lower, said Daley.

A remodeled crematory could cost between \$800,000 to \$1 million.

Some voters wondered whether it was worth it to construct a new crematory. Town Manager Rocco Longo said the crematory returns net revenue of \$200,000 after expenses to the town annually. It is one of the town's revenue generators, he said.

Planning Board member Aboud Al-Zaim pointed out that at this rate in five years a new crematory costing \$1 million would pay for itself.

Fiscal Advisory Committee member Paul Brogna supported the capital expenditure: "\$80,000 is a reasonable cost to develop a design and specs for a new building," he said.



Voters defeated Jones' amendment and included the \$80,000 in the DPW's capital budget.

Other approved crematory capital items included relining a crematory retort for \$60,000 and a Goldoni "Transcar 25" utility vehicle for \$18,000. Money for these items will come from a fund for the sale of lots and graves that contains \$297,000.

Voters approved all other capital budget items without much debate including \$10,000 for computer technology and information systems for town government. This is to improve the town's web site to offer residents the option of paying for fees and permits online.

The police will receive \$10,000 for a copy machine. The harbormaster will replace a 1997 out-of-service truck with 98,000 beach miles with a \$25,000 truck. He will also buy new buoys for Duxbury beach that delineate the swim area from Blakeman's to the third cross-over for \$3,000. The town will spend \$10,000 for seawall repairs on Gurnet Rd.

The Department of Public Works will receive \$269,923 for road repairs, which is reimbursable from the state, \$25,000 for a S-10 4x4 pickup truck, \$10,000 for two plows and frames, and \$28,000 for a Lands and Natural Resources half-ton 4x4 pick-up truck. Capital items to be bonded include two dump trucks with plows for \$95,000 each, a one-ton 4x4 DPW dump truck for \$55,000, and \$90,000 for a front-end loader for the transfer station.

The approved water department capital budget includes \$75,000 for water main upgrades on Captain's Hill and Indian Trail; \$75,000 for system rehabilitation, which includes new service connections; \$45,000 for water main replacement on Bay Pond Rd.; and \$15,000 for a rate study. The water department will bond \$1.1 million for water main replacement for a section of Route 3A and also borrow \$100,000 for PCE water pipe replacement. The bonding passed with a two-thirds majority.

Voters approved using the water free cash to pay for a \$65,000 6-wheel dump truck, a \$25,000 truck, and a \$40,000 one-ton dump truck. Also, water free cash will fund \$100,000 worth of new controls at the well pumping stations.